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# Walt Critics Agree Tactic to Avoid Taking Hard Stand

## More Marines Are Needed, President Told

From Gazette Press Services

WASHINGTON—Maj. Gen. Lewis Walt, commander of Marine Forces said Monday that he had told President Johnson "we need more" Leathernecks there to drive out Communist forces and make sure they stay out.

Walt declined to say how many more Marines he wanted but said there now were 40,000 serving in Vietnam.

Speaking only of the 185-mile long area of Marine operations in the northern part of South Vietnam, the general said "we need more forces out there in order to secure" areas that the Marines have cleaned out.

"If you could stay there a year, you could eventually destroy them all and get the confidence of the people," he said.

As things stand now, Walt said, he does not have enough Marines to keep forces in cleared sectors for very long.

The general said some of the areas the Marines had penetrated south of Da Nang had been under Communist control for 12 or 13 years. "You just can't go in a few months, get rid of them, and reconstitute the government. It takes time."

In the last few months, he said, it has been more and more difficult to get the guerrillas to stand for a "really showdown fight."

He said, however, that main

up one heck of a fight."

He estimated that there was at least a regiment of North Vietnamese troops operating in the area of his command. Walt said he intended to keep at least 6,000 of his Marines in the field at all times fighting the main force Communist elements. At the same time, other Marines will operate in small units against the guerrillas.

If United States Marines and South Vietnamese troops can stay in an area long enough to secure it and give the local people confidence that they will be protected, Walt said, the quality of intelligence information about the Viet Cong will improve. Such intelligence is a key to effective operations, he said.

In the last few months, Walt said, Vietnamese people brought under Marine protection have "given us some very key information."

At a separate news conference, Senator Edmund S. Muskie (Dem., Mo.), said that a Central Intelligence Agency report prepared for him showed the North Vietnamese "are beginning to have serious doubts about the wisdom or probable success" of the war.

"There is no room for excess optimism," the CIA report said. "However, the military situation has stabilized \* \* \* and it is our adversaries who are beginning to have serious doubts about \* \* \* their present courses of action."

Muskie said he endorsed the administration's policy on Vietnam which, according to the CIA report, "is getting results."

A member of the Mansfield mission to Vietnam, Muskie said the CIA reported that events of the past year "have had a material adverse effect on Viet Cong morale and shaken throughout their ranks."